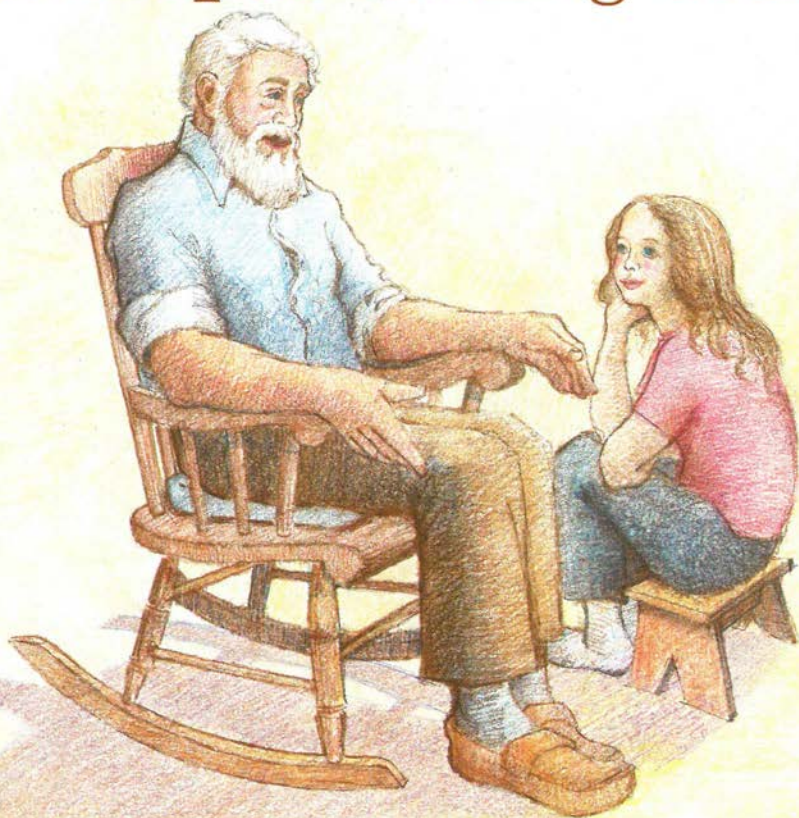


# Stories from Grandpa's Rocking Chair



*written by* **Sarah Kaetler**

*illustrated by* **Neil Klassen**



**Stories from  
Grandpa's Rocking Chair**

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## CHAPTER 1

### *Pioneers on the Move*

Moving was much on Janie's mind today because her friends had just moved to another town. This made her sad. She had enjoyed visiting her neighbours. Besides the many wonderful toys which Cheryl and Melanie had, they also had a trampoline. In hot weather they would pour some water onto it and jump around on the trampoline. What fun they had! Cheryl and Melanie never seemed to tire of sharing their toys or their trampoline. But now everything had been packed into boxes and all the boxes had been loaded into the moving van. The house, where Janie's friends once lived, was now empty and lifeless.

"Did you see them off, Janie?" asked Grandpa.

"I sure did," responded Janie. "Moving might be fun for them, but I'll sure miss them a lot. Do you like moving, Grandpa?"

"When I was your age, I liked moving. But in

those days we had no moving vans or moving trucks. We used horses. Would you like to hear about our moving experiences, Janie?"

Janie saw that far-away look in her Grandpa's eyes, and she heard the excitement mounting in his voice. She knew that Grandpa was again turning back the clock of time, and how Janie loved to hear Grandpa tell of the many exciting things that happened years ago.

"Janie," began Grandpa, staring out of the window, "let me tell you how we moved from Aberdeen to Nipawin, Saskatchewan. I was ten at the time. I was the second youngest of nine children. I remember my age because I celebrated my tenth birthday on the trip."

"Was your dad being transferred to a new job, Grandpa?" Janie wanted to know.

"No, we moved because the soil in that area was better for farming. Here it had been sandy and stony land. When the time came for moving, we packed all our belongings onto three hayracks, a democrat with a buggy tied behind it, and a double-box."

"Why did you tie the buggy behind the democrat, Grandpa? And what is a democrat?"

"Oh yes," replied Grandpa. "A democrat — it's a two horse wagon. We did that because we were short of drivers. We also had about fifteen head of cattle which were herded along by one of us on a pony. I remember our dog, an excellent cattle dog, kept the cattle on the right path. He always

saw when a cow or a calf strayed and would gently guide them back to the herd.”

“What did you feed your dog, Grandpa?”

“Well, Janie, one thing is certain! We didn’t buy dog food in those days, for there was none to buy. We simply fed him some of the food we ate.

“Finally, we were on our way. Were we ever excited! We were happy to share this time together. The trip was to last about two months.”

“Two months!” exclaimed Janie. “That long?”

“Janie,” said Grandpa, “we had to move slowly because some of the cattle were milk cows and could not be driven too quickly. On one of the hayracks we had a cream separator and every evening the milk was separated. We used the skimmed milk while the cream was saved for butter. We had brought our big five gallon churn along to make butter on the trip. The churn was made from a barrel and could be operated either by hand or with a foot pedal.”

“Wow!” sighed Janie, “I sure wish I could have gone along with you, Grandpa.”

“It was exciting, but not always fun. On the first day we had left early in the morning. Now it was close to lunch time, and we were all hungry. Because the animals needed water as well as food, we usually stopped near a lake, a stream, or if absolutely necessary, a farm with a water pump. We found a place with water, and settled down for a noon rest. It really wasn’t much of a rest for my parents and my older brothers and

sisters, because each one of them had chores to do. Some loosened the horses from the wagons, and watered and fed them while others cared for the cattle. Besides helping my mother with the lunch, I had to look after the dog and chickens. All the animals were given some grain which we brought along in the double-box. We ate a hearty lunch of bread and milk. We sat on the grass near our wagons, bowed our heads reverently while Father gave thanks to God. Sometimes Mother would spread cottage cheese on our bread as an added treat, but that day we had only the bread and milk. Immediately after eating, we packed up, hitched the horses to the wagons and proceeded on our way.

"The road wasn't at all like the roads of today. Often they were merely two tracks, barely noticeable at times. However, traffic was very light. Only a few times did we pass a horse drawn farm vehicle. On and on we travelled, always seeing new scenery. Sometimes we stopped to rotate jobs. And, sometimes we took time to chat a bit because the noise of the wagon wheels made conversation while driving almost impossible."

"Did you travel at night too, Grandpa, or did you stay at a motel?"

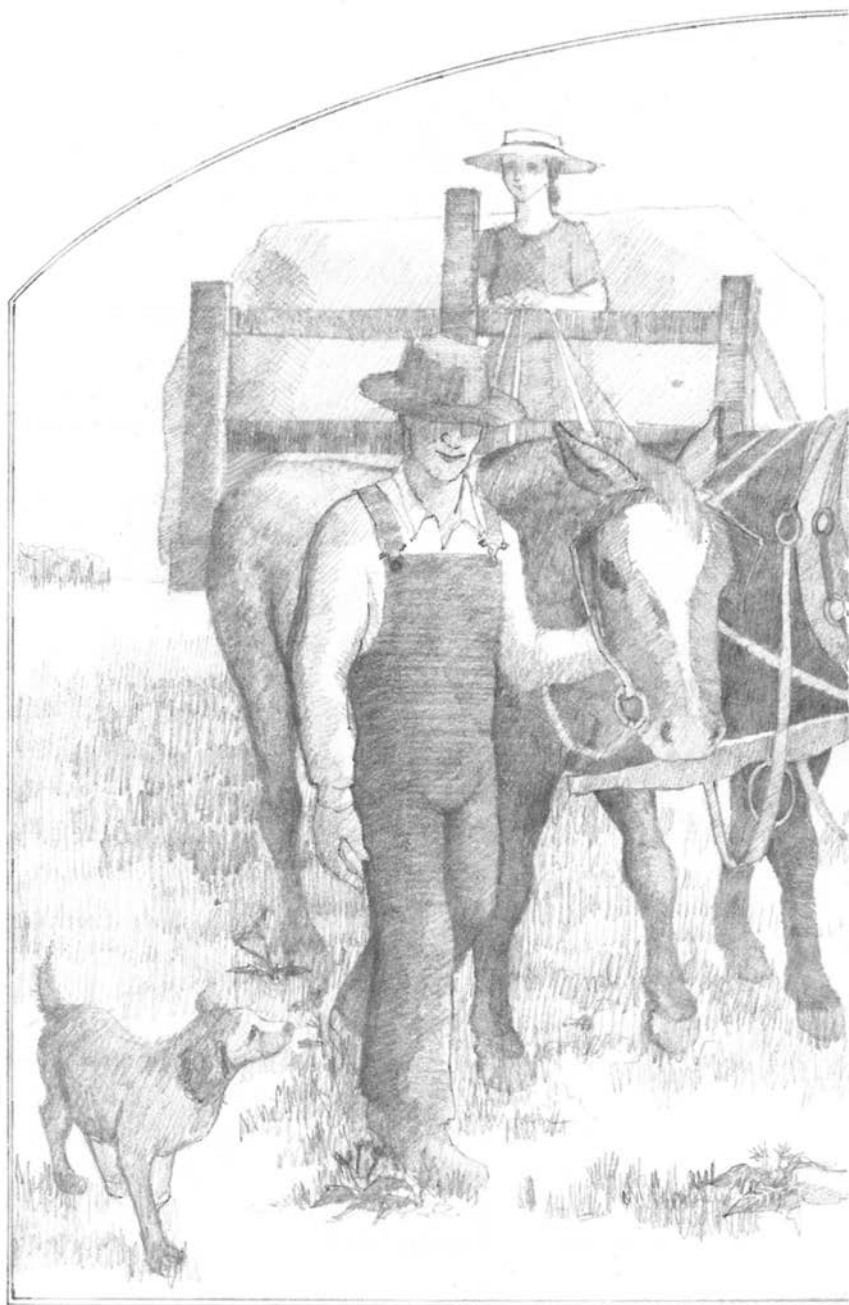
"No, Janie, there were no such places as motels in those days! We would stop wherever there was water. Sometimes it was early in the afternoon and at other times it was quite late in the evening. Often we were very tired and quite ready for bed

but we always had much work to do before we could go to bed. We'd have to unhitch the horses, remove their harnesses, water and feed them. The cattle too had to be watered and fed, and our tent had to be put up for the night."

"Did you have a camping tent in those days Grandpa?"

"Not really! We had a tent that my mother had made especially for this trip. The tent was like one big bedroom, large enough for all of us to be able to sleep in it. While some of the family put up the tent, others milked the cows and separated the milk. Mother and Dad were usually busy lighting the little camp stove and making supper. I don't remember what all the meals were, but they were always delicious.

"After feeding our dog and chickens I was soon off to bed. The fresh air, the tired muscles, and the long days helped all of us fall asleep quickly. In the morning we'd all wake up feeling refreshed and ready for whatever the new day would bring. Beds had to be rolled up, the tent had to be folded, food and drinks had to be prepared for all the animals as well as for the family. Before each breakfast, Father read a portion from the Bible and prayed, thanking God for protection on the way, for our food and for His love to us. After we had eaten a hearty breakfast of porridge and milk we checked to make certain everything was ready for the day's travel. With a loud 'Gidee-up' we would be off for another day. Clippety-clop,





clippety-clop."

"Didn't you get a little bored after a while Grandpa?" asked Janie.

"Get bored? Not in the least! There was always something to keep us busy."

"What were some of the most exciting things that happened on that trip?"

"Well," responded Grandpa slowly, "let me think, Janie. Ah, yes, there was the accident with our dog, then there was the problem we had with the swamp and the thrill of having a birthday to celebrate. Do you want to hear all that Janie, or are you getting tired?"

"Oh no, Grandpa, you know I never get tired of hearing you!" answered Janie emphatically.

"All right then, I'll tell you about the accident. It was a sad event. We had finished eating lunch, the sun was shining warmly as we started on our way. Suddenly there was a yelp! When we stopped and looked our precious dog had been run over by one of the wheels! We saw immediately that he would die. This was tragic, because we all loved him so much, and, besides, we needed him to help with the cattle. We stopped long enough for my dad to dig a little grave near a tree where we buried our dear dog. We picked a few wild flowers and placed them on his grave. It really was a sad day for all of us.

"Another near tragedy was our encounter with swamp land. You remember, Janie, that the road was only two tracks across the fields. Once, while



we were following the tracks as we had always done, we noticed that the ground felt soft and appeared to be getting very soft. The tracks we were following had been made during the cold winter months, but now the soft ground was not fit for any travellers."

"Weren't there any signs to warn you?"

"No Janie, there were no signs. I guess no one expected a stranger to travel through there. We tried turning around but soon realized that it only made matters worse. While the rest of us prayed earnestly, Father signalled the horses to move forward. No one dared speak. As Father signalled, the horses jerked forward. They sank to their knees, pulling ever so hard at the sinking wagons. But, miraculously, the horses managed to pull the wagons through onto firm ground. God heard our prayers, and allowed us to get through that horrible swamp."

"Wow, Grandpa! Wasn't it scary? I would have been terrified."

"That it was Janie! I'd never want to try it again!"

Both, Grandpa and Janie, were silent for a few moments, deep in thought. "Now then, let me tell you about that birthday we celebrated," Grandpa finally continued. "It was my birthday. My tenth! That morning my father prayed before breakfast as he always did, but this time he prayed especially for me. Then he lifted his bowed head and smilingly informed me that they had

a special birthday present for me."

"What was it Grandpa?" asked Janie, excitedly, "What did you get?"

"Why don't you guess?"

"A little toy wagon with horses?"

"No!" laughed Grandpa, "Nothing like that at all."

"What then? Please tell me," exclaimed Janie.

"Well," said Grandpa slowly, "my Dad, Mother and I walked over to where the cattle were grazing, and there, lying in the grass was the cutest little spotted calf! It had black, wet curly hair which was drying fast in the warm sunshine. What a morning that was! The birds were singing cheerfully, the animals all seemed to be content and satisfied. And, I had a calf for my birthday! They couldn't have given me anything better in all the world! I petted the calf and I loved it.

"You see Janie, moving brings both sad and happy experiences. That was the case when I was your age, and I'm sure that is the case today."

"But Grandpa, I think moving was much more exciting when you were young!"

"I don't know about today's moving, but I know our moving experience was exciting."



## CHAPTER 2

### *Grandpa's First Breadmaking*

"Hi Grandpa," shouted Janie as she bounded up the steps to the front door of her grandparents' home.

"Well, well, hello there, Janie," answered Grandpa with his usual big smile. "Home from school already? I didn't even hear you knocking."

"Oh, I'm sorry, I forgot," said Janie putting down her lunch kit and taking off her blue blazer with the school crest sewn onto the sleeve. Oh, how she loved her Grandpa and Grandma. Why, Grandpa was known all over town for his terrific stories, or at least so Janie thought. They were Grandpa's own experiences, which made them extra special!

Janie sniffed the air.

"Mm, mm," she said. "What is Grandma cooking? It sure smells good!"

Without waiting for a reply, Janie went down

the hallway, simply following her nose to the kitchen and to Grandma's cooking.

"Hi, Grandma!" she exclaimed.

"Hello, Janie," said Grandma, kissing one of Janie's red cheeks. Janie watched Grandma take four golden-brown loaves of bread from the hot oven. She looked at the bread and then at Grandma. Grandma understood Janie's look. She had seen it before.

"Yes, Janie, we'll taste some of this bread after it has cooled, won't we? Why don't you go and talk with Grandpa in the living room while I get our snack ready?"

When Janie entered the living room Grandpa was reading the newspaper. As soon as he noticed her, his glasses came off and his paper dropped beside him.

"Grandpa," asked Janie, "will you tell me a story until Grandma gets our snack ready?"

"Sure, Janie," answered Grandpa. "Come right over here and sit on this stool beside me. Let me tell you how I made bread for the first time in my life."

Janie snuggled up to her Grandfather, tilting her face upwards. She knew that she was in for a real treat! Her eyes sparkled as she eagerly waited for the story.

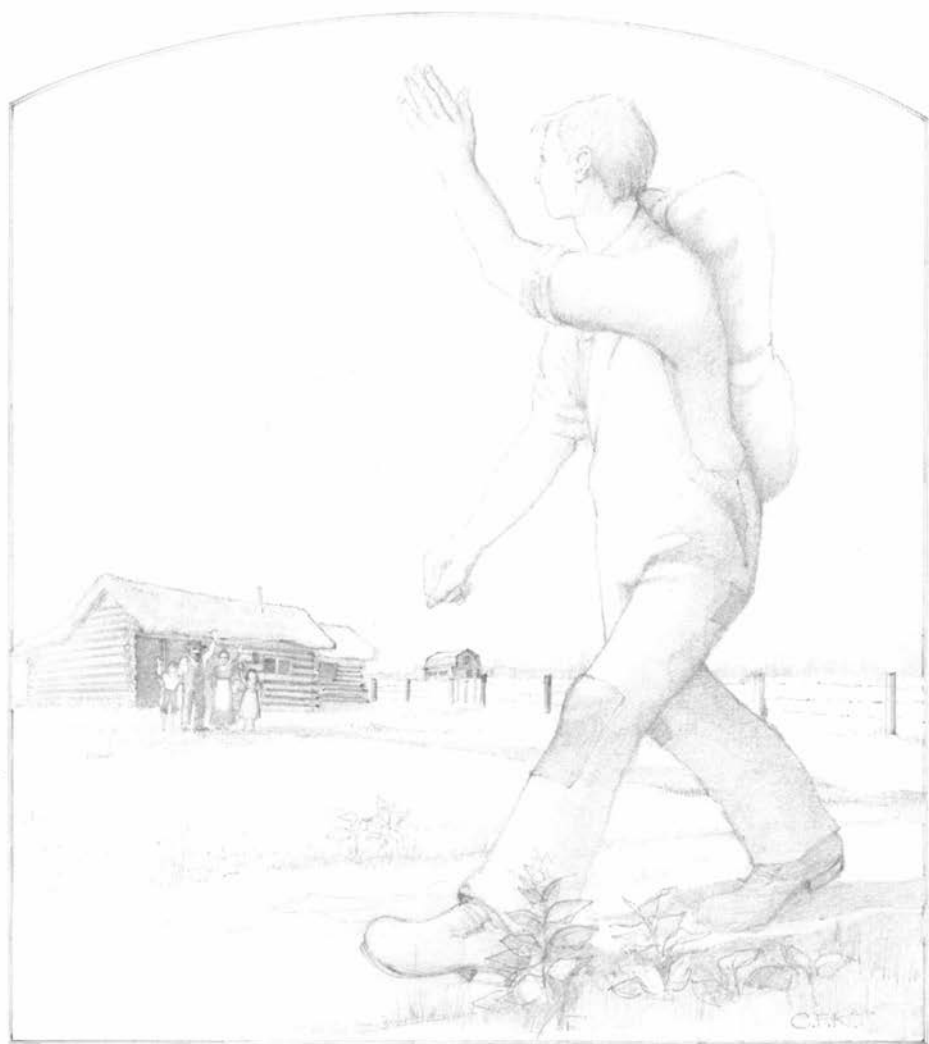
"Well," said Grandpa, gently stroking his bearded chin, "I was a little older than you are, Janie. In fact, I remember having just turned fifteen when I left home."

“Did you run away from home, Grandpa?”

“No Janie, I didn’t run away from home! You see we were very, very poor during that time. My parents, which are your great grandparents, wanted me to help on the homestead farm but they couldn’t afford to do that. They needed money to buy shoes, clothing and food for the family. Because my older brothers had married and left home, I was now the oldest son at home and had to look for work elsewhere to help provide our family with money. I remember clearly, as though it were today, how my mother wrapped up my few clothes, my Bible, a blanket and a pillow as well as some thick lard sandwiches. My father handed me his last five-dollar bill. This money was to last me until I would begin earning money. My father then prayed for God’s protection and God’s blessing over me before everyone kissed me goodbye. Then I was on my way with my bundle on my back. I had very mixed feelings. I was afraid and yet I was proud to see how my family trusted me. I would not let them down, I decided, never would I let them down!

“After days of traveling, on foot and on several different horse drawn farm wagons, I finally met a farmer who said that he could give me a job. Oh I was thrilled! My first job!

“This farmer took me into his house for lunch. He then showed me a little old shed on the yard which was to be my home. He asked me whether I knew a bit about cooking because I would be



making my own meals. I agreed happily. I was so thrilled about having a job.

"The shed looked a bit shabby. The old, gray weather-beaten door squeaked when the farmer opened it. We both walked in. Because it was a beautiful spring day, there was a warm, musty smell inside. Then the farmer left me. I put my bundle of things on the floor and looked around. There, in one corner was a long, brown, wooden chest with a mattress on it. This was my bed. On the other side of the little room I saw an old table and a chair. In the middle of the room stood a little, rusty, brown tin stove with a black stove-pipe meandering through a hole on one side of the shed and out. The stove was small, Janie. It was very small. The length was about the same as from my elbow to my fingertips, and the width was about half that. I noticed that one end of the stove was for the fire while the other end was designed as a baking oven.

"While I was exploring my new home, the farmer came back and offered me a ride to the little country store to buy some groceries for myself. Together we went outside and I helped the farmer hitch two horses to a wagon. 'Gidee-up!' he yelled, and clippety-clop, clippety-clop the horses trotted along, giving us a rough and somewhat jerky ride to the little country store some four or five miles down a dry, rough, dirt road."

"Did the store sell ice cream and such things



Grandpa?" asked Janie.

"No, Janie, the store sold mainly such things as shoes, clothing, oil for lamps, and groceries. You see, Janie, there was no electricity in the country in those days. We used either candles or coal oil lamps for the long, dark evenings.

"When we arrived at the store I walked in and looked around. I bought flour, yeast, sugar, salt, oatmeal for porridge and oil for my lamp. You see, the farmer would be giving me the vegetables and milk. We soon headed for our team of horses which we had tied to a fence post. Clippety-clop, clippety-clop, we went back home. Thanking the farmer for the ride, I picked up my groceries and headed for the little shed, my new home.

"Once inside, I soon had a happy little fire burning. I then untied my bundle and made up my bed for the night. My jacket and cap I had hung up on a nail on the wall. I knew I needed bread, so I immediately mixed yeast, flour and water together. I had seen my mother do it many times. This I made into a round ball about the size of a football. I then put the dish of dough near the stove. You see Janie, dough must be kept warm so that it will rise."

"I know," said Janie proudly.

"After eating the last of my lard sandwiches which I had brought from home, and drinking some fresh milk from the farmer's cow, I decided to go to bed. I was tired! I checked the dough once more and noticed that it was still the same

size. I decided to let the fire in the stove die down for the night, but what should I do with the dough? An idea popped into my head. I patted down the ball of dough in a shallow pan, covered it with several pages from an old Eaton's catalogue and placed it under my pillow to keep it warm."

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed Janie heartily, "Grandpa, you were funny!"

"Janie," said Grandpa, "I had to keep the dough warm. I thought that this was the best solution. I didn't want to stay up all night to keep a fire burning so that the dough would stay warm. Today I know better, of course, but at that time I thought that this was probably a very clever idea. I blew out the oil lamp and crept into the box to sleep, thanking God for protecting me and for giving me a job. Ah, the bed felt good! I stretched out and slept soundly.

"In the morning I woke up feeling refreshed but I noticed that my neck felt a bit sore. Jumping out of bed I checked to see if the dough had risen."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Janie even more loudly than before.

"Alas, there was little change. I needed bread badly, so I decided to build a fire and to bake the dough the way it was. I opened the little oven door and put the pan in. After eating a hearty breakfast of rolled oats porridge with some of that good farm milk, I went out to help the

farmer with some chores. After about half an hour I came back to check on my bread and to put more wood onto the fire. When I opened the shed door I was in for a surprise. There was smoke coming from the stove! I rushed into the shed to open the oven door. Another surprise!"

"What did you see, Grandpa? What did you see?" Janie couldn't wait to find out.

"What did I see, Janie? I saw that the dough had indeed risen. In fact it completely filled the little bake oven! The real problem seemed to be that while the dough burned on the side nearest the fire, it was still unbaked on the other side."

"How did you know?" asked Janie.

"How did I know? When I opened the oven door the dough began to slide out. I had to do some fast thinking in order to figure out what to do."

"What did you do Grandpa?" Janie asked eagerly, ready to burst into laughter. "What did you do?"

"I had a plan, Janie. I decided to turn the pan around. That was, if only I could get at the pan, for it was out of sight at the moment. I opened the door and out slid some dough which I caught in another dish. Slowly I could see the outline of the pan. With a fork, a knife and a poker I managed to turn the pan but to my dismay the dough wouldn't turn along with the pan! What was I to do?"

"Don't ask me, Grandpa. I wouldn't know what

to do," remarked Janie soberly.

"Well," continued Grandpa, "I sat down on the floor and forked out all that was in the oven using every tool I could find. Bit by bit I got it all out! Some of it was black, some of it brown and some white and soft. The dough that was baked I kept out, while the white, soft dough I put back onto the pan and into the oven."

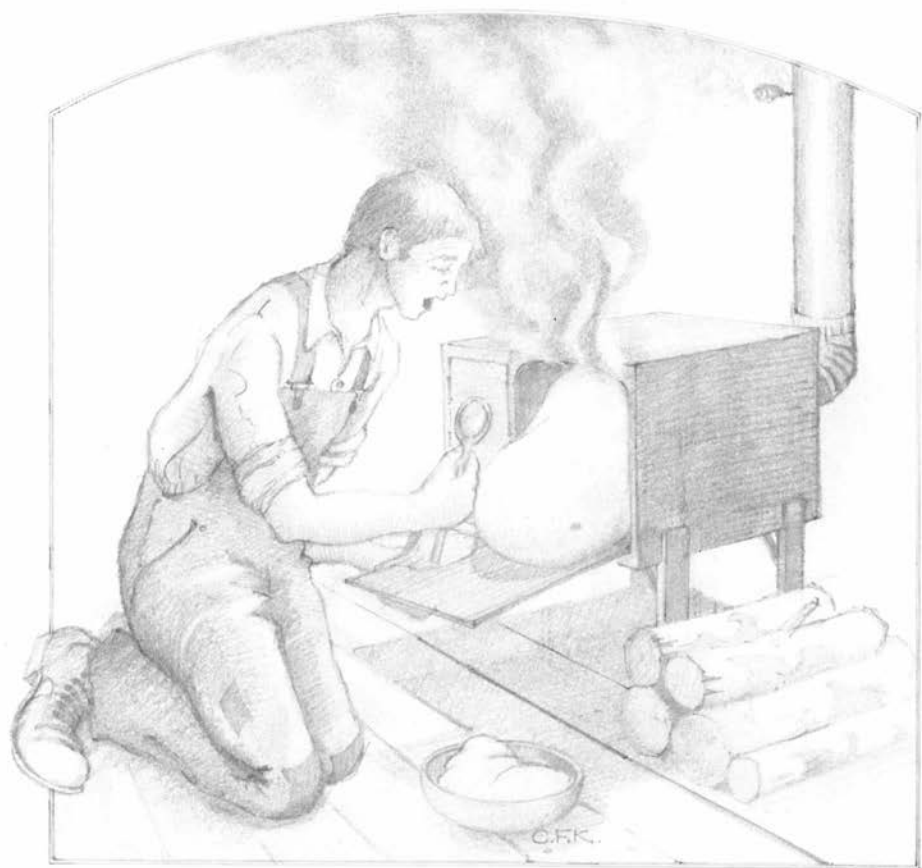
Chuckling a bit, Janie asked why he didn't just throw it all out and start over.

"Oh no, Janie," answered Grandpa, "I couldn't do that! I just couldn't afford to be wasteful. That was all the food I had. When I had finished baking it all, I even remembered to thank God for the bread before I ate it."

"Yuck!" exclaimed Janie.

"Sure Janie, I agree. It wasn't as good as my Mother's bread, nor was it as good as your Grandma's bread is, but I was hungry, and then everything tastes good. Janie, I have never in my life thrown away bread. Today I could afford to throw it away but I will not do so, because I know that there are many people in the world who have nothing at all to eat."

Just then the kitchen door opened slowly and in walked Grandma with a tray. Mm, did the food look good! There were three mugs with steaming hot chocolate, and there were three pieces of Grandma's deliciously warm, fresh bread, spread with golden, grilled cheese which was dribbling down the sides. Janie's eyes grew bigger and



bigger as she looked at the delicious bread. She licked her lips in anticipation as she looked at Grandma, then at Grandpa and then again at the tray. She gave them each a hug before she sank her teeth into the warm break.

"Hold it," Grandpa reminded. "Let's not forget first to thank our Heavenly Father."

Grandpa prayed, and then the three of them enjoyed the nourishing bread. Soon it was time for Janie to return home to her parents.

"Grandpa," she declared as she got ready to leave, "I'll never forget your story, and Grandma, you're the best bread maker in the whole world!"

Janie gave each a quick hug and kiss and then dashed homeward. As she got to the sidewalk, she turned for another look at her grandparents who watched her smilingly. Janie waved goodbye and then happily skipped home.



### ***WHITE BREAD (BULKI)***

- 1 package yeast
- 2 cups water
- 2 cups potato water
- 2 tbsp. sugar
- 2 tbsp. salt
- 2 tbsp. shortening
- 12 cups flour (approx.)

Add yeast and sugar to warm water. Let stand 10 minutes. Add enough flour to make sponge. Cover and let rise in a warm draft-free place. When light add salt and shortening. Knead in the rest of the flour. Cover and let rise again; when double in bulk, punch down and let rise again. Shape into loaves, put into pans, let rise; when light, bake in 350° oven for one hour. Makes three loaves. If you like a crusty bread, do not cover while cooling. Brush loaves with melted butter when putting in pans.

## CHAPTER 3

### *The Runaways*

“Look outside Grandpa! See that horse? It’s Lisa’s. She got it for her birthday. It’s an appaloosa, isn’t it Grandpa?”

“Yes,” answered Grandpa. “It’s a good-looking appaloosa too. But I didn’t realize that it was Lisa’s. I’ve seen it go by a few times. I thought it was so beautiful, I wanted to take a picture of it for my slide collection.”

“Did you ever own an appaloosa, Grandpa?” asked Janie.

“No Janie, I didn’t, but I’ve had a German coach, a standardbred, and also a couple of Shetland ponies. When I grew up we used horses instead of machinery for all our farm work and transportation. We rode horseback to school. When the weather got cold we hitched a horse to a caboose, which was really a covered wagon without the wheels. Our covered sleigh had windows all around, and little holes in front



through which the reins were drawn. We had a tiny woodstove in the sleigh, with a narrow chimney for the smoke. So while the horses went clippety-clop, clippety-clop in the freezing prairie weather, we drove our five miles or so to school feeling cozy and warm."

"But Grandpa, wasn't it dangerous to have a stove in the wagon?"

"Yes, Janie, it was, but our parents always made sure that the tamest horses were used with the caboose. But even then, accidents happened."

"Couldn't be anything like our car accidents. Besides, Grandpa, I think more accidents occur now with cars, than did back then with horses. Don't you think so?"

"Could be true, Janie, could be true," replied Grandpa. "But sometimes we had real bad accidents. Did I ever tell you that both your Grandma and your Daddy could have been killed by a runaway team of horses?"

"Tell me again Grandpa! I know I've forgotten most of the story."

"Well Janie," said Grandpa slowly, taking a deep breath, "your Grandma and I had three small children when this happened. Your Daddy was a very tiny baby, about six weeks old. Your Uncle John was three and your Aunt Tina was about five. Grandma wanted to visit her parents, your great-grandparents. I harnessed the horses, Tip and Shorty, and hitched them to our democrat buggy."

"A what kind of buggy, Grandpa? What's a democrat?"

"Oh dear," laughed Grandpa. "A democrat. It's a two horse wagon. A one horse wagon is simply called a buggy."

"I noticed that Tip and Shorty seemed to be quite lively that day so I suggested to Grandma that I better exchange them for Bets and Dina who were quieter, but your Grandma was a brave young woman and insisted she could handle the lively team."

At this point Grandma came in from the kitchen, and sat down beside Grandpa and Janie. She picked up her knitting as Janie asked, "Grandma, weren't you afraid of the lively horses?"

"Oh no, Janie!" exclaimed Grandma, "I wasn't afraid. I never enjoyed driving with slow, lazy horses. Besides, I wanted to get there as quickly as possible because I had my three small children to take along, and the weather was beginning to grow chilly."

"Grandpa," continued Grandma, "just continue with the story. I'll listen while I finish knitting this sock."

"All right," said Grandpa, taking another deep breath. "I drove the team up near the house, tied the horses to a post and helped Grandma and our little children snuggle up in the blankets of the wagon."

"Your Daddy, who was snugly wrapped was placed on another blanket on the floor near

Grandma's feet while the other two children sat next to her on the seat. You see, Janie, the driver always had to have both hands free to drive. That's why Grandma couldn't hold the baby.

"I checked to see that everything was hooked up properly. Then I waved goodbye, proud of my lively team of horses, my wagon and especially my beautiful family. One 'Gidee-up' and the team was off! Clippety-clop! I watched and listened until they were over the hill.

"Grandma, do you want to tell the rest?"

"No, Grandpa, you're doing fine, just continue."

"Well Janie, at first everything went well. Then while Grandma checked to see if the baby was all right, she accidently dropped one of the reins. This frightened the horses. They lurched sideways and forwards, galloping as fast as they could. Grandma now had only one rein which she could pull!"

"Grandma, you shouldn't have pulled on one rein because that makes horses go in circles."

"No," said Grandma slowly, "I shouldn't have, but shouting 'whoa! whoa!' just didn't make them slow down at all. The horses were too frightened."

"Well," continued Grandpa, "the horses ran into the ditch then back onto the road, then into the other ditch, and back onto the road again! Fortunately, the ditches were not too deep. But the something drastic happened! The shafts of





the buggy broke and Grandma was thrown off! Grandma, you better tell Janie the rest."

"Yes Grandpa, I'll tell Janie what happened after that. After I fell off, I remember getting up slowly, watching the team race away. All I could do was to pray, and did I ever pray! I repeated over and over, 'God save the children! God save the children!' I tried to go after the team but I was hurting too badly. I hobbled along the road when I heard a sound behind me. I turned around. Guess what I saw! My little five-year old, Tina, crying but alive. She ran to me. I grabbed her and hugged her and looked her over. She seemed okay. Hand in hand we walked, limping. I needed help! We headed for the nearest farm. The farmer, who had seen everything, came galloping towards me on his horse. He helped us onto his horse and quickly led the horse to his farm. I moaned and groaned and prayed, 'Oh God, save the children.' That was all I could do."

"What happened to the other children and the team of horses?" Janie was anxious to know.

"Grandpa, you tell the rest, you know what happened," sighed Grandma, feeling heavy-hearted.

"Alright," agreed Grandpa. "When the neighbours, who lived far apart from each other, finally heard the news about the runaway team they were all eager to help. You see, Janie, we had no telephones in those days. The news was carried by horseback from farm to farm. One of

these riders, such kind hearted folk, found our little John in the ditch, crying but unhurt."

"How about Daddy? Where was he? Tell me Grandpa!"

"Your Daddy, Janie, the baby of the family, was found safe and sound in the wagon, fast asleep. Because one horse had worked its way free, the other horse had pulled what was left of the wagon, with the baby still in it. A brave man in the neighborhood had somehow managed to stop the frightened horse. He unhitched the horse and let it run home. He inspected what little was left of the wagon. What a surprise! He found a tiny, sleeping baby wrapped in blankets resting safely on the floor of the wagon! Janie, that was God's answer to your Grandma's prayer," concluded Grandpa.

Janie looked up at Grandma, who wiped away some tears from her eyes. Janie leaned over, put her arms around Grandma and declared, "I love you, Grandma. I love you too, Grandpa. But most of all I love God who wouldn't let anything bad happen to my family."

It was time to go home. Janie picked up her lunchkit and turned to Grandpa and Grandma.

"I'm glad no one got hurt too badly when the horses ran away. I'm especially glad that God protected that wee little baby — my Daddy!"

## CHAPTER 4

### *Helping Neighbours*

“You are a bit late today, aren’t you, Janie?” asked Grandma, as Janie came up the front steps.

“Leanne and I helped our teacher sort out books today, Grandma. Once a week our class exchanges twenty library books with another class, so that we get a new bunch of books to read. I like to help my teacher even if it means staying after school. Some children don’t, because they want to go out to play. Wouldn’t you want me to help my teacher?”

“Oh yes, Janie, I think that’s a good idea. I don’t mind it at all if you help your teacher. But we’re so used to you stopping in before you run home, that we worry if you don’t come immediately. Could you tell us ahead of time when you plan to stay after school?”

“Sure, Grandma, I’ll try to remember. I’ll ask my teacher to tell me in advance so I can tell you. But, Grandma, you shouldn’t worry.”



"But we can't help it," responded Grandpa, who had just come in and had caught most of the conversation. "We don't mind if you help your teacher. Helping others is a good thing to do."

"Grandma, could I please have a cool drink? I'm thirsty!" Grandpa added.

"I'll get you something right away. I would have had it ready had I known when you'd be finished with Mrs. Brown's lawn," Grandma noted.

"I didn't only cut her lawn," added Grandpa, wiping perspiration from his face. "I trimmed her hedge too. That was quite a job but it sure looks neat and tidy now. She was so glad to have it all done again."

"Does Mrs. Brown pay you for all the work you do for her, Grandpa?"

"No Janie, she doesn't pay me with money but she sometimes finds other ways to pay me."

"What other ways?" Janie wanted to know. Grandpa got up without replying and went out to get something.

"Look," he announced as he came back in, "she gave me these roses."

They were beautiful! There were red, white and yellow roses. Grandma carefully put the roses in a vase and placed them on the table. Soon the whole room smelled like the roses.

"Grandpa, Mrs. Brown paid you for the work you did today, didn't she?"

"Yes," responded Grandpa. "Today she gave

me roses to take for Grandma. But even if she just thanks me, that is enough pay. We don't help others just for pay, Janie, do we?"

"No, Grandpa, I think we help others because we like to. That's why I help my teacher."

Grandma brought in a nice, cool drink of lemonade for Grandpa and Janie. She also brought a plate of buttered, toasted raisin bread.

"Grandpa," said Janie as she munched on the bread, "have you been helping other people all your life?"

"Your Grandpa has helped people as long as I can remember. Very often he did it without getting a cent for it too," interjected Grandma. "Grandpa, you still remember how Uncle Henry rounded up all the neighbors for the barn raising, don't you?"

"Oh yes, I remember it well," he replied.

"What's this about a barn raising? Did you lift the barn up? Please tell me about it."

"Listen carefully, and I will. There was a family living on a small farm a few miles away from us. They were poor and sickly. In those days there were many poor people. This farmer and his twelve year old boy had been working on their barn, a huge one, for a long time. They needed a barn but they couldn't afford to hire help to get it finished more quickly. One day this farmer went to Uncle Henry's store for some groceries. He told Uncle Henry that life was not treating him well at all! He was sick most of the time, and

couldn't sleep at night because of a bad cough. Because of all this he was getting nowhere with his barn.

"Uncle Henry was a kind, sympathetic man. He gave him some groceries and told him to pay whenever he was able. After this man had left the store, Uncle Henry did some fast thinking. Not many days later he was on our yard with his frisky team of horses. He told us about the sick farmer and the help that he desperately needed. We soon decided that a barn-raising day was needed. The date for the event was set. Uncle Henry declared that both the men's and the women's help would be needed. Then, before leaving to inform all the other neighbours, Uncle Henry thanked us for being willing to help."

"Did they all come on that day, Grandpa?" inquired Janie.

"Yes, they all came. There were people there that hadn't even been asked to help. They were driving by, saw the activity and stopped to help."

"What a good surprise for that poor family."

"It certainly was, Janie. Building a barn was a very big undertaking, a very big job. Uncle Henry had to drive his team of horses from town to town to look for lumber and the shingles. Not every town had them. When the lumber, nails, and shingles had been collected and brought to this farmer's place, it was time for everyone to work. All the families came early the next morning to start the barn raising project."

"Did the ladies help to build a barn in those days, Grandpa?"

"Grandma can tell us what the ladies did to help, Janie. Grandma, can you sit down for a bit and tell Janie what the ladies did during the barn raising?"

"I'd love to! You see, Janie, the men worked very, very hard and so they had to eat well too. The women prepared a good dinner and a good supper. This meant that there were many dishes to wash and dry. Between meals, both in the morning and in the afternoon, we prepared for coffee break. We served pie and coffee for a snack."

"Did the children help too?" Janie wanted to know.

"Yes, the children helped too. That is, after school, of course. The older boys handed nails and other things to the men, while the older girls helped take care of the smaller children."

"They must have had a lot of fun! Did they, Grandma,"

"I think we all had fun, Grandma, didn't we?" replied Grandpa in a nostalgic tone of voice.

"We sure did!" exclaimed Grandma. "And, seeing how very happy this family was, made it even more fun. We had never seen them look that happy before. We always thought of them as grumpy people, and no wonder. This farmer, his wife and their six children must have felt as though their world was coming to an end. There seemed to be no way out of their distress. The



doctor had told them that the father's cough was much more serious than a cold and that he would have to go to a sanitarium for several months. This they certainly could not afford."

"But back to the barn raising," interjected Grandpa. "What a beautiful sight the new barn was. That night, after all the people had gone home, the farmer, his wife, and their six children knelt down in the barn to give thanks to God. Their faith and trust were restored. God had provided."

"Did the farmer have to go to the hospital?"

"Yes, Janie," said Grandma, "he had to go for several months, but he got well again and the family was happy."

"Helping others when they need help is fun, isn't it, Grandpa and Grandma?" Janie commented.

"Yes, it's fun even if there is no pay!" chuckled Grandpa, with a twinkle in his eye.

## CHAPTER 5

### *The Closet*

Grandpa was working on his camper. He had bought new tires for his old Fargo truck and was putting them on while Janie watched and chatted about her day at school.

"Our play is going to be terrific," she exclaimed." Grandpa, you and Grandma just have to come! We're all going to wear clothes from the 'olden' days."

"Have you asked Grandma for one of her old dresses yet?" asked Grandpa while he changed the last wheel.

"No, but I want to," answered Janie. "I'll go and ask her right now. Mommy told me to ask Grandma because we don't have any old clothes at home."

"Grandma!" shouted Janie, all excited as she burst into the house. "Do you have any old dresses I could wear for our play at school?"

"Hi Janie!" Grandma greeted Janie in her usual

friendly way, "What's this about some old dresses?"

As Janie explained, they both hurried upstairs to the extra closet. Grandma opened the closet and showed Janie some beautiful old dresses. Janie picked out a blue polka-dotted dress with many small buttons and button holes down the front. The skirt was quite full, and had lace around the neckline and the cuffs.

"Do you think I could wear this dress, Grandma?" asked Janie hopefully.

"Let's try it and see," answered Grandma. Janie tried it on and Grandma checked to see what could be done to make it fit.

"I'll have to shorten it and make it a bit smaller," she said, but added that she could soon have it ready for Janie. Together they also went through a box of clothing and found an old purse, a pair of high-heeled shoes, a fancy straw hat and a shawl. Janie was delighted!

"I'm sure my teacher will like my costume," she asserted.

"I think so too," said Grandma. "When is your play going to be, Janie?"

"I don't know for sure," answered Janie, "but as soon as I know, I'll tell you, Grandma."

Together they carried the clothes downstairs. Grandma carried the dress and the shawl while Janie took the old shoes and the purse. Janie was excited! She could hardly wait for Grandma to get the dress finished.



"Grandma," she asked, "could I take the shoes, the purse and the shawl home today to show to Daddy and Mommy?"

"Well," responded Grandma kindly, "why don't you wait until tomorrow, when I'll have the dress ready too?"

Janie agreed. It was hard to be patient when she knew that she was going to be wearing one of the best old-time costumes. The shoes were a bit too long but Grandma was going to stuff the toes with paper to make them fit. When Grandpa came in Janie told him enthusiastically about their good fortune. When Grandpa saw the dress they had selected, he stopped short.

"Isn't that the dress Aunt Trudy wore?" he asked.

Grandma answered that it was and was surprised that Grandpa still remembered. Grandpa laughed loudly but didn't say any more. This made Janie very curious!

"Grandma, what is wrong with the dress? Please tell me. Or can Grandpa tell me?"

Grandma knowingly looked at Grandpa, for she knew what Grandpa was thinking.

"It's just something very, very funny, Janie. If Grandpa wants to tell you he can, but if he doesn't, we'll have to leave it for now. Someday, Janie, you'll get to hear the story that is connected with that dress."

This was a bit too much for Janie! How could Grandpa and Grandma keep the story from her,

especially when she was going to wear the dress? It sounded so mysterious!

Grandma was busily taking out thread from the dress while Grandpa went into the kitchen to put on some water for tea. After a few minutes he carried the tray into the living room and set a cup of tea down for Grandma and one for himself. For Janie he had brought a glass of milk and some cookies. Grandpa sat down in his favorite chair and sipped some of the refreshing tea. Janie picked up her glass of milk and slowly drank some of it, while she seriously studied Grandpa's face. The little smile around the corners of Grandpa's lips, and the twinkle in his eyes told Janie to have patience because she would soon hear the mysterious story about the dress!

Finally Grandpa set down his teacup and began the story, "Your Aunt Trudy was an interesting person. She cheered us up many a time."

"Yes, she surely did that," remarked Grandma. "With Aunt Trudy there was never a dull moment. I shall never forget the experience with the neighbour's closet. The polka-dotted dress she left behind reminded me of that incident."

"Janie, listen and see whether this experience that Aunt Trudy had will be funny to you as well. You see, Aunt Trudy was a school teacher. Although she was a strict teacher, the children all loved her. The parents were always happy to have her teach their children, for then there would be less fooling around and more good learning.

Aunt Trudy remained in teaching while her friends got married, one after another. Although she liked teaching the fact that she was the only single lady began to bother her. Of course, we liked to tease her about that occasionally too. But we were wrong to do that."

"Is it wrong to be single, Grandpa?" asked Janie.

"No, Janie, it is not wrong at all. Many people have never married, but have given great service to mankind.

"Anyway, although we teased her, we noticed that Aunt Trudy showed interest in a young man named Dietrich. But Dietrich had been telling people that he wasn't interested in getting married. He enjoyed his farm too much. His horses, frisky and well-cared for, looked very impressive when he drove past. Sometimes he would drive his fine team past the little red school house.

"One fine day after supper, Aunt Trudy dressed up in her most beautiful polka-dotted dress and went to the neighbour's place. She claimed that she wanted to cheer them up a little. We thought that perhaps she wanted to become better friends with them because Dietrich was a friend of theirs."

"Did she cheer them up, Grandpa?"

"Oh yes, she cheered them up all right," continued Grandpa. "Something Aunt Trudy didn't know, was that Dietrich was there. He had come there with the neighbour rather than with his

own team. Are you still following me, Janie?" asked Grandpa.

"Oh yes! I'm listening!" said Janie.

When Dietrich and the neighbours saw Aunt Trudy coming into the yard all dressed up, Dietrich headed straight for the closet door. In he went, quickly closing the door behind him. This closet was used for the dirty, smelly farm jackets, boots and caps. Dietrich thought that Aunt Trudy was probably just bringing a message to the neighbours, and that she was on her way to some other important meeting."

Janie giggled loudly!

"Aunt Trudy knocked at the door and was invited in. They chatted together happily. In no way did the neighbours give their secret away. When one of their little boys went to the closet door to open it, the mother jumped up just in time to stop him. She then sent all three of the children into the bedroom to play until she would call them. With puzzled looks on their faces they all traipsed out, one after another. The neighbour lady offered Aunt Trudy a cup of tea. All three sat around the table, sipping their tea. They talked about the weather, about making gardens, and about school. Suddenly a team of horses and a buggy came onto the yard."

"Oh, oh!" exclaimed Janie in anticipation.

"Aunt Trudy almost choked on her tea, for she was certain that Dietrich had arrived. She excused herself saying that she would just go into the other



room for a little while. With that she opened the closet door, stepped in, and closed the door quickly behind her."

Janie laughed loudly!

"There stood Aunt Trudy in the closet, now fully realizing that it was a closet and not another room. The closet of course had a strong barn smell which bothered Aunt Trudy. However she tried to remain totally quiet as she waited and listened for Dietrich's voice. All she heard was some breathing behind her! She also felt warm breathing on her neck. This shocked and scared Aunt Trudy so much that she pushed open the door and rushed out. She looked back at the closet in horror. To her surprise Dietrich followed her out of the closet! His face was very red when he came into the light. He looked sheepishly at Aunt Trudy, but all he could say was that it had been very hot in the closet."

"It sure must have been hot and smelly," noted Janie, laughing as hard as she could.

"The neighbour lady," continued Grandpa, "acted as if she had the worst toothache, because she covered her whole mouth and face with a teatowel. Her husband finally said, 'Let's all have some more tea.' Just then the visitor with the buggy knocked at the door. When the door was opened, in walked the local minister. He looked surprised but unusually happy. He willingly accepted a cup of tea. No one knew what to say because of the awkward situation. The minister

soon excused himself for coming at this time and left. Before he left though, he shook the neighbour couple's hands. He then held both Dietrich's and Trudy's hands and wished them God's blessing upon their decision."

"That was funny!" laughed Janie. "The neighbours must have laughed hard too. Is that a real story, Grandpa, or did you make it up?" added Janie sceptically.

"Oh no, it's real!" responded Grandpa. "This really happened to your Uncle Dietrich and Aunt Trudy."

"They got married then didn't they?" asked Janie.

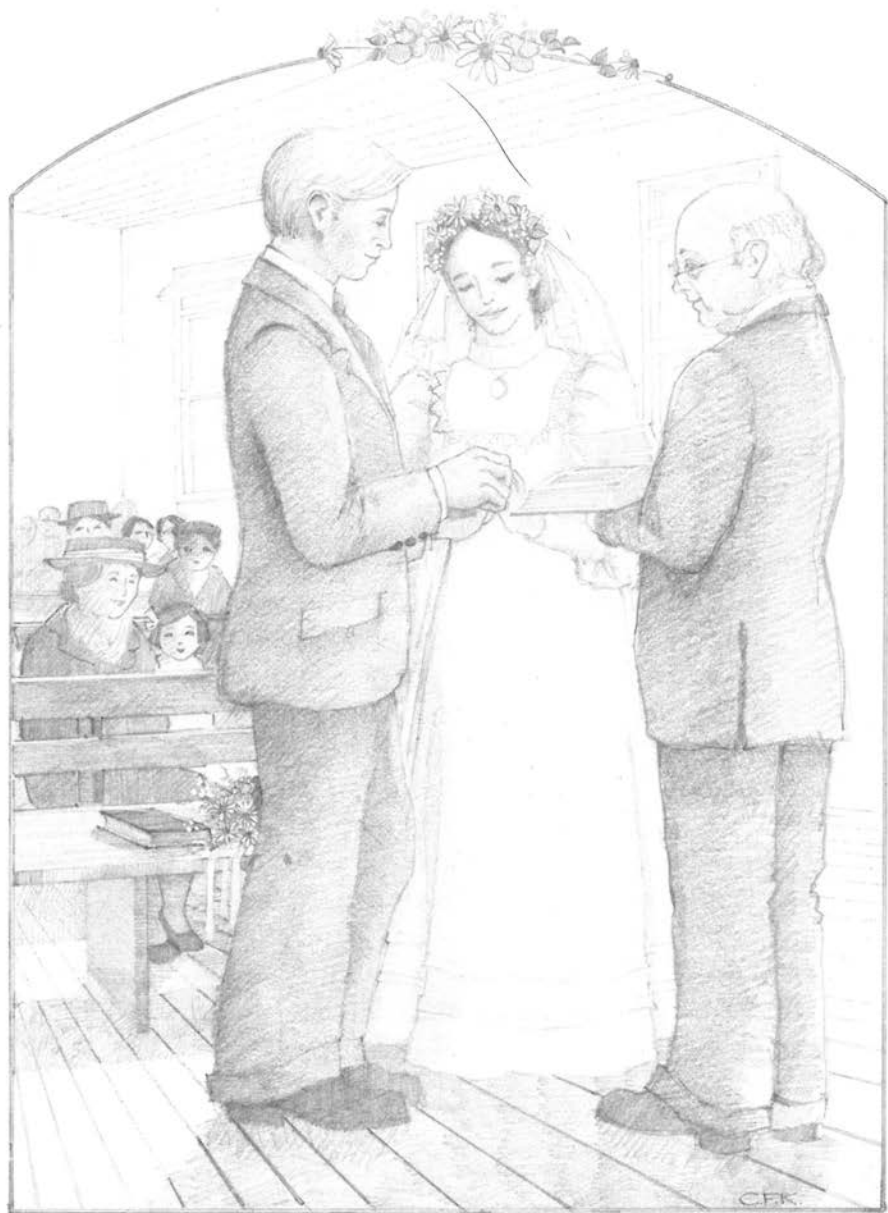
"This all happened in spring. The wedding was in summer just after school was out," answered Grandpa. "It was a big, lovely wedding."

"Were they happy, Grandpa?" Janie wanted to know.

"Yes, they were very happy, Janie. We might say that they lived 'happily ever after'."

"I'm glad I picked Aunt Trudy's dress, Grandma," reflected Janie. "It will remind me of Uncle Dietrich's and Aunt Trudy's closet story."

"When we visit them with our camper this summer we'll tell them that their closet story still cheers people up!" added Grandpa.





## CHAPTER 6

### *Uncle Henry's Store*

"Tomorrow is the day we're going on our field trip," declared Janie with determination in her voice. This trip had been postponed several times for a variety of reasons, such as rain, or the lack of a bus driver or something else. But tomorrow definitely was the day! Janie also indicated that she wouldn't need a lunch because everyone would be treated to a hotdog and some juice.

"Grandpa," added Janie enthusiastically, "I sure wish you could come along because you could explain everything in the museum to us much better than anyone else could. Couldn't you come, Grandpa?"

"So you are going to visit the museum," declared Grandpa, without answering Janie's question.

"Grandpa, first we're going to visit some stores: a grocery store, a clothing store, a fabric store and a drug store. Then, if we have any time

left, the teacher said we'd visit the museum."

"Grandma and I would like to go along on the bus if your teacher would like us to, but, won't your bus be filled with students, Janie?"

"Yes Grandpa, I'm afraid it will be full because three classes are going on the same bus."

"Well, that settles that," responded Grandpa.

"Grandpa," continued Janie, already thinking about other things. "Do you remember the time you told me about Uncle Henry's store? What kind of a store was it?"

"I'll gladly tell you about Uncle Henry's store, Janie, but first let me tell you a little about Uncle Henry himself. Your Uncle Henry was a special man."

"What do you mean, Grandpa?" asked Janie, anticipating a good story.

"He was a man who lived what he preached. He was honest. You see, Janie, some people act very nice in front of other people, but when they are alone, where they think no one sees them, they are altogether different. They never act the same way. Do you know what I mean, Janie? They are not dependable. They might say one thing to you and another thing to someone else. People like that are called hypocrites."

"I know what you mean, Grandpa, but that is not being honest, is it? But tell me about Uncle Henry's store, Grandpa."

"All right, Janie. Uncle Henry, the youngest son, lived with his parents on the farm. He worked



with his father, plowing, seeding and harvesting grain. Of course, they had no tractors in those years so they used only horses for all the farm work. Uncle Henry kept on working hard year after year. In order to earn extra money, he helped the neighbours when they needed additional help. Sometimes they gave him other things instead of money, such as a horse or even a plow. He continued to work on his parents' farm until he was twenty-seven years old. Then he decided it was time to strike out on his own. He sold his team of horses, his plow and many of his other things and opened up a bank account with the proceeds from these sales."

"Wow, Grandpa, I'm only ten but I already have a bank account!" Janie noted.

"That's good," said Grandpa, as he continued his story.

"Uncle Henry went looking for work, which he soon found. All day long he loaded and unloaded large sacks of grain. This was very, very hard work."

"Why didn't he look for an easier job, Grandpa?"

"In those days, Janie, people were very lucky to have any kind of job at all."

"Did he earn a lot of money, Grandpa?"

"A lot of money? Not really. He made seventy-five cents a day."

"You mean seventy-five cents an hour, don't you, Grandpa?"

"No Janie, seventy-five cents a day."

"Oh wow, that wasn't much money for such hard work. I don't think I'd want to work for that little."

"It was very little money indeed, Janie, but Uncle Henry learned to save his pennies. No matter how hard the work was, Uncle Henry stayed with the job for a whole year. While other young men wasted their money foolishly, Uncle Henry saved his for his future home. He was not going to waste his money nor ruin his health. His purpose in life was to please his maker: God. You see, Janie, when Uncle Henry was twenty-two years old he became a Christian. That made all the difference in his life.

"The day arrived when Uncle Henry took his savings out of the bank and bought a corner lot from one of the farmers. He wanted to build a country store. The farmer who sold him the one acre did so because he welcomed the idea of a store so close. Who, in those days of the horse and buggy, of icy, rough roads and of blizzards would not appreciate having a corner store near by? After Uncle Henry and the farmer agreed on the price, Uncle Henry counted out the money carefully, paid for the lot and immediately started working on his store plans."

"How much did he pay for the lot, Grandpa?"

"I don't remember, Janie. Uncle Henry, his heart filled with thanks to God, cleared several feet of snow from the area. He cleared enough for

a small shed before he began building the small country store. He built the store on skids."

"What are skids, Grandpa?"

"Janie, skids are a bit like runners on a sleigh. If a house is built on skids it can be moved to another place at any time. With the help of his friend, Uncle Henry soon completed his store. A tiny room was built at the back which was to be his home. Besides now owning an acre with a store, Uncle Henry was able to buy a democrat, a buggy with two seats, a Bennet wagon with rubber tires and a good team of horses. Uncle Henry wanted to use the Bennet wagon to haul groceries and supplies from town.

"Grandpa, I don't know how Uncle Henry could buy all those things when he earned only seventy-five cents a day," noted Janie.

"Nor do I," responded Grandpa, "when I really come to think of it. Of course everything in those days was cheaper, Janie. For example, butter was five cents and a dozen eggs were five cents as well."

"Five cents!" exclaimed Janie. "How much money does a pound of butter cost today?"

"Janie," answered Grandma from the kitchen, "I bought a pound of butter today for \$2.43."

"Wow, what a difference! Right, Grandpa?"

"That's quite a difference all right. But, even though everything was cheaper in those days, Uncle Henry knew how to stretch a dollar. He was a frugal man.

"Anyway, Janie, when the store was finished Uncle Henry made many trips back and forth from town with the Bennet wagon. He was buying stock from the wholesalers. Soon the shelves were filled neatly with oatmeal, sacks of flour, sugar, oil for lamps, shoes, boots, skirts, and many other things. Opening day arrived! How happy Uncle Henry was! All went well. He was a cheerful, kind and friendly clerk. The children from the school across the street all came to get their free candy. Uncle Henry had promised them a penny's worth as an opening day prize."

"He was a kind storekeeper wasn't he?"

"That he was, Janie. People often couldn't pay for their groceries, so Uncle Henry accepted things such as farm eggs or butter or even a small pig instead of money."

"Did Uncle Henry like doing that?"

"Whether he liked it or not, if he wanted business he had to accept this way of buying. Of course this made Uncle Henry's bookkeeping more complicated too."

"Uncle Henry did something else as well. He cut people's hair. On weekends he often had a lineup of people waiting until the store closed so that they could get their hair cut."

"Was a haircut five cents too?" asked Janie.

"No," answered Grandpa, "haircuts were free! He did that as a favour to anyone that came to the store and wanted one. Janie, are you getting tired of listening?"

"No, Grandpa! I enjoy your stories. Tell me more about Uncle Henry's store, or are **you** getting tired?"

"No, I'm not getting tired, Janie, so let's continue. Uncle Henry was doing well in his store. Everyone said how much they appreciated a store in that farming area. Because of the farm work some people occasionally had to come after store hours. They would then knock on the back door. This made it hard for Uncle Henry. When the store business became too busy for one person to handle, he decided to hire a clerk for the store. The man from whom he had purchased the lot had an eighteen year old daughter who was given the job. This girl was polite, very efficient, and very beautiful. Each time when Uncle Henry returned from town with a load of groceries or other things he marvelled at how well his clerk had managed everything."

"I think I should like to work in a little store too," added Janie.

"Good," responded Grandpa. "It is then very important to be good at arithmetic as well as all other subjects.

"Well Janie, one day when Uncle Henry came back from town with another big load, he was hot, tired and hungry. He unloaded his cargo, went to his room for a little lunch and then walked into his store. Again everything was in order. As he walked in, the clerk looked up at the store manager's handsome face, sensing that he was



pleased with her work. He suddenly took note of her beautiful face, her black hair, her blue eyes and her lovely smile. His big hand came down gently on her smaller white hand and stayed there until some customers walked in. They quickly continued with their jobs.

From then on though, whenever their eyes met, Uncle Henry knew that he was not looking at his clerk only; he was looking into the eyes of his sweetheart, his future bride. Oh how wonderful he felt! Oh how happy they both were!"

"That sounds exciting! Did they get married?"

"Oh yes, Janie, they got married about nine months later. They had a simple but beautiful wedding in the little church. Their home was ready. Uncle Henry had fixed up the back room of the store with curtains for the windows and everything else that they would need. How happy they were! From then on they worked together, sang together, prayed together and laughed together. It just seemed as though this wedding had been made in heaven. And it had been!"

"Grandpa, do you think that when I will get married I will be happy too?"

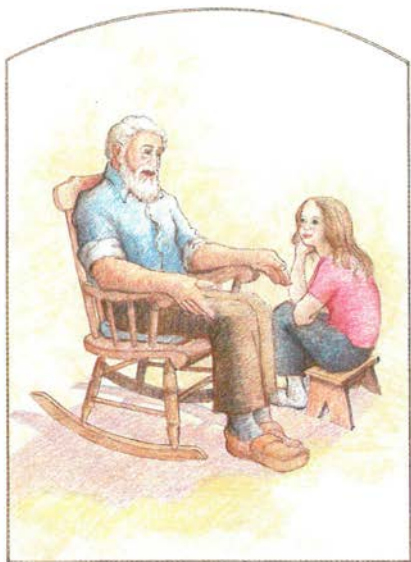
"Why not, Janie? But you need not worry about that now. You'll have enough time to think about that when you are a bit older. Now you need to do your best at school, and become well prepared for whatever job you will have. You need to be well prepared before you get married too. There is a time for everything, Janie. The

Bible teaches that! It says:

'To everything there is a season and a time . . . a time to be born and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to pluck up that which is planted.'

"Do you know Janie, I think that was the secret of Uncle Henry's success. He waited for the right time for everything. God blessed him for it. He waited on God! "We too need to look up for guidance. We must not try to run ahead of God. Janie, you are still young. Remember to obey God, and obey your parents."

"Yes Grandpa," responded Janie. "I want to do that. Thanks for a good story. Now I better run home. I need to get some things ready for our field trip. Bye Grandpa, bye Grandma! I love you."



## Stories from Grandpa's Rocking Chair

Janie loved life and was excited about the adventures that every day brought. She enjoyed being with her grandparents, and thrilled at hearing stories about life in pioneer days. What excitement must have filled the lives of the early settlers! What hardships they endured! If her grandparents could survive the difficulties of their day, then surely she could endure the seeming hardships of her daily experiences.

Listen with Janie as Grandpa relates story after story: some sad, some humorous, but all filled with excitement and interest. And, all providing truths for living life to the full.